

# IMPROVING OUR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS: ARTICLE 80 MODERNIZATION

*May 31, 2025*



Planning Department

**CITY of BOSTON**

# ZOOM CONTROLS TO LISTEN TO INTERPRETERS

**(EN)** Look for the interpretation icon (globe) at the bottom of your screen and select the language you want to hear.

**(Kreyòl Ayisyen)** Chèche ikòn entèpretasyon ki gen fòm (glòb) anba ekran ou an epi seleksyone lang ou vle tande a.

**(Español)** Busque el ícono de la interpretación (globo) en el borde inferior de su pantalla y seleccione el idioma en el que desea escuchar.

**(Tiếng Việt)** Tìm biểu tượng phiên dịch (hình quả địa cầu) ở phía cuối màn hình của bạn và chọn ngôn ngữ bạn muốn nghe.

**(简体中文)** 查找屏幕底部的翻译图标(地球仪), 然后选择您想听到的语言。

**(繁體中文)** 查找屏幕底部的翻譯圖標(地球儀), 然後選擇您想听到的語言。



# ACCESS TRANSLATED MEETING MATERIALS

**(EN)** The project presentation has been translated and is available on the Planning Department website

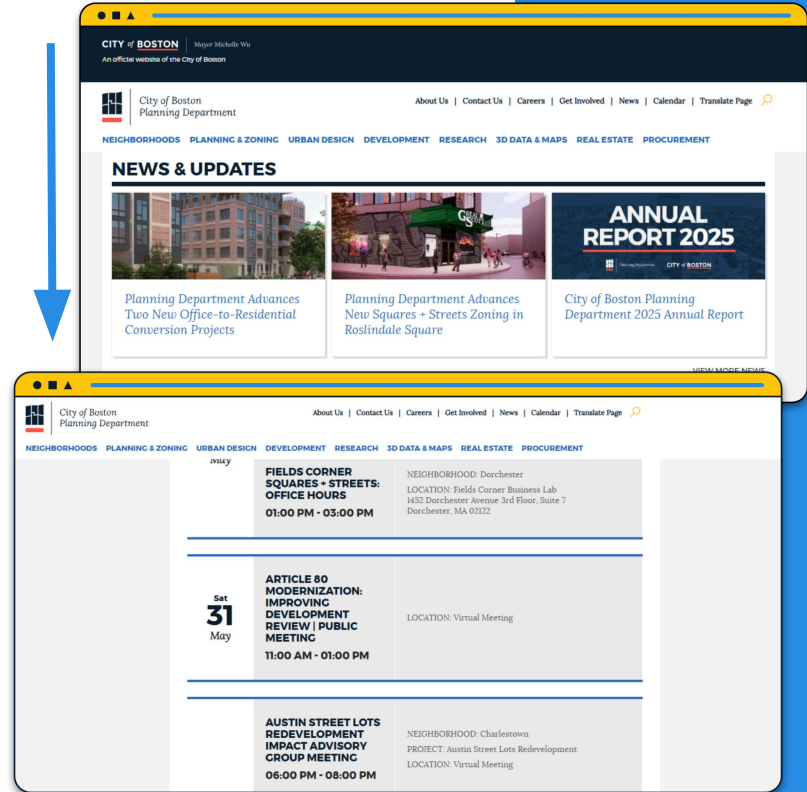
**(Kreyòl Ayisyen)** Prezantasyon pwojè a te tradui epi li disponib sou sitwèb Planning Department

**(Español)** La presentación del proyecto se tradujo al español y está disponible en el sitio web el departamento de Planificación

**(Tiếng Việt)** Bài trình bày dự án đã được dịch sang tiếng Tây Ban Nha và có sẵn trên trang web của Cơ quan Kế hoạch và Phát triển Boston

**(简体中文)** 该项目演示文稿已翻译成西班牙语, 可在波士顿规划和发  
展局 网站上查看

**(繁體中文)** 此專案簡報已翻譯成西班牙語, 可在波士頓規劃和發展局  
網站上查看



# ZOOM TIPS AND MEETING INFO

**We will be recording this meeting** and posting it on the Planning Department's project webpage. If you do not wish to be recorded during the meeting, please turn off your microphone and camera.

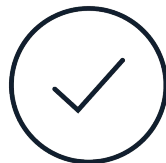
**Zoom controls are available at the bottom of your screen.** Clicking on these symbols activates different features.

**Use raise hand function** (dial \*9 if joining by phone) **and wait to be called upon to unmute** (dial \*6 if joining by phone) before asking your question or providing comment.



# PLEASE ASK FOR CLARIFICATION

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## **Ask questions in the chat along the way**

Our staff are available to answer during the presentation



## **Ask for us to clarify any terms or concepts we discuss**

We want to make sure that what we cover is accessible to everyone, allowing all to share their informed feedback

# Help Us Understand Who We Are Joined By Today

## INTRO POLL

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*If you can't get the poll to work, feel free to add your responses in the chat*

1. How familiar are you with the current Article 80 process?
2. Have you been engaged in the Article 80 Modernization project before today?
3. What neighborhood do you live in?
4. What is your affiliation?

# MEETING OVERVIEW

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## Meeting Schedule:

- 11:05- 11:35 am - Presentation
- 11:36- 1:00 pm - Questions & Answers

## Presenters:

- **Kristiana Lachiusa**  
*Planning Department Deputy Director of  
Community Engagement*
- **Kevin Crossley**  
*Transformation Project Manager*



# MEETING CODE OF CONDUCT

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## **Respect one Another**

*All attendees are expected to respect one another and any differences of opinion.*

## **Welcome Difference in Opinion**



*We welcome differences of opinion, including opinions that differ from the Planning Dept.*



## **Constructive Feedback**

*Constructive comments and opinions should be aimed at topics, not people.*

## **Allow All to Speak**



*To allow your fellow attendees a chance to ask their questions or comments, speaking time will be limited to 2 minutes*

## **Code of Conduct**



# AGENDA

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*Presentation*



*Context*



*Overview of Early Actions*



*Proposed Zoning Amendments*



*Next Steps*



*Questions & Answers*





# OVERVIEW OF EARLY ACTIONS

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# IMPROVING OUR DEVELOPMENT REVIEW PROCESS

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**Article 80 Modernization** is an effort led by the Planning Department to review, analyze, and recommend improvements to the technical code, operations, and community engagement practices related to our development review process.



## What are we trying to achieve?

A predictable, timely, and transparent development review process that can improve and modernize how we grow Boston.



# ARTICLE 80 MODERNIZATION: WHY THIS, AND WHY NOW?

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Today's development review process is lengthy, opaque, and unpredictable, which, when coupled with an outdated zoning code, **makes it harder to grow our city.**

Review times across projects are **lengthy and unpredictable**

Mitigation and community benefits requirements are **inconsistent**

Community engagement methods are **inaccessible** to many Bostonians

**Competing policy priorities** make it harder to advance good projects



# PROJECT SUMMARY

SPRING 2023

**Project begins**

**Phase 1 Engagement:**  
Listening & Research

**Phase 2 Engagement:**  
Develop  
Recommendations



Public meeting on  
emerging ideas  
February 28, 2024

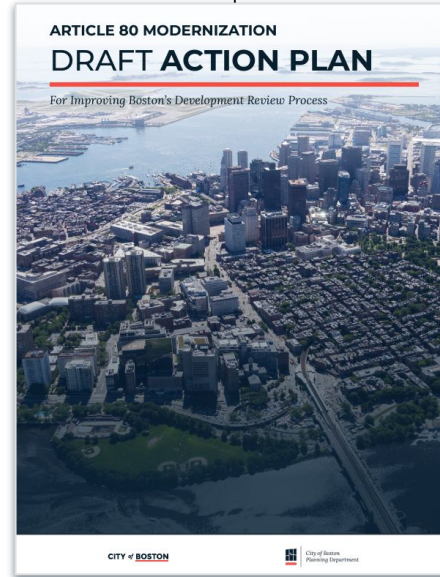


Public workshops on draft  
recommendations  
May - June 2024

FALL 2024

**Release Draft  
Action Plan**

**90-day comment  
period**



After our 90-day open  
comment period we carefully  
reviewed all the feedback and  
prepared next steps

SPRING 2025

**Released Updated  
Action Plan, Early  
Actions, and Draft  
Zoning Amendments**

# RECENTLY RELEASED MATERIALS

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1

## ACTION PLAN UPDATE

### Updated Action Plan

*Updated Action Plan document, including version with marked up changes to highlight how changes have been incorporated based on engagement feedback.*

2

## DRAFT ZONING AMENDMENTS

### Draft Zoning Amendments

*These draft zoning changes clean up outdated language and introduce changes with broad stakeholder support.*

3

## IMPLEMENTATION PLANNING

### Early Actions Supplement

*Outline of next steps for*

*1) Early actions that will be implemented this year*

*2) Work plans outlining further study and testing before implementation*

*2A) CATs*

*2B) Predictable mitigation*



# WHAT'S HAPPENING THIS YEAR + BEYOND?

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## EARLY ACTIONS

### ENGAGEMENT + INTERNAL OPERATIONS

*Initiate new processes and internal culture change to enable meaningful, long-term reform*

### BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

*Gather input when and where it has the greatest impact*

### ZONING

*Increase clarity, and prepare for future reforms*

## LONG-TERM ACTIONS

*Continue Engagement + Research*

### COMMUNITY ADVISORY TEAMS

*Define a new strategy for advisory bodies*

### MITIGATION AND BENEFITS

*Create a predictable framework*

### ZONING

*Formally adopt a modernized way of working*

# EARLY ACTIONS: OPERATIONS

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1

## CLEAR EXPECTATIONS AND STANDARDS

Establish protocols for smoother review process

2

## EVALUATE NEW TIMELINES

Systematically track and assess City's capacity to consistently meet deadlines

3

## EFFECTIVE FEEDBACK DELIVERY

Use standardized templates to deliver consistent reviews

### **Why these changes?**

*This work starts with us. We are updating our internal processes and leading staff trainings to ensure we are doing our part in supporting a more predictable and transparent process.*

### **What will this look like?**

*Updated written feedback from Planning Department staff that is clear and specific*





# EARLY ACTIONS: COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1

## EARLY DEVELOPER-LED OUTREACH

Build trust and understanding  
between community and  
project proponent

2

## NEW ENGAGEMENT METHODS

Offer community members  
new options to get involved, in  
ways that work best for them

3

## TRANSPARENT DECISION MAKING

Community members  
understand how their  
feedback helps shape a  
development project

### **Why these changes?**

*We have heard how important it is to make it easier to learn about our work and share feedback. We will be trying out new tools to make engagement more effective, timely, and transparent.*

### **What will this look like?**

*Improved facilitation of public meetings, engagement summaries, and new ways to submit your feedback to the City*



# EARLY ACTIONS: **BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS**

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1

## **BCDC REFORM**

Improve the experience of BCDC while retaining its strengths

2

## **IMPROVED INTERDEPARTMENTAL COORDINATION**

Create a review and approval sequence that makes sense

### **Why these changes?**

*Since we are now a City department, we have an opportunity to improve how we work together with other departments to ensure that the City “speaks with one voice”.*

### **What will this look like?**

*Clear communication on the purpose of each review*



# EARLY ACTIONS: ZONING

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1

## ARTICLE 80 CODE CLEANUP

Prepare for future reform by  
correcting outdated language in  
areas with high consensus

2

## ARTICLE 28 UPDATES

Implement BCDC reform

### **Why these changes?**

*Both Article 80 and Article 28 were written more than 30 years ago. We have proposed changes to update the text to match the way we work today.*

### **What will this look like?**

*Written requirements that match how things actually work*



# ONGOING WORK ALSO INFORMING CHANGES

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Throughout this project, we've been testing ways to get good projects into the ground faster.

We are using these learnings to improve our process overall.



**ACCELERATING AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING PROJECTS**



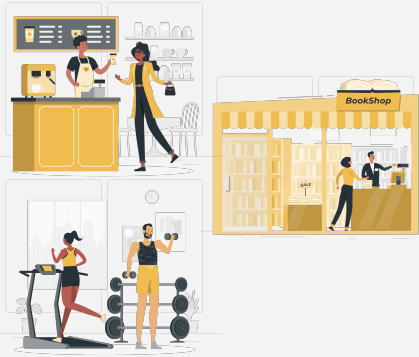
**OFFICE TO RESIDENTIAL  
CONVERSION**

# PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT

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# WHAT IS ZONING?

**Zoning is a set of laws** that dictate what and where you can (or can't) build in a city and how the City can review certain proposed new buildings. A **“Zoning Text Amendment” is an update to the rules** within the text of the Zoning Code. Some of what zoning regulates include:



## LAND USES

*The types of activities allowed within a given area*



## BUILDING DIMENSIONS

*How much space a building takes up, its height, and the open space around it*



## OTHER REGULATIONS

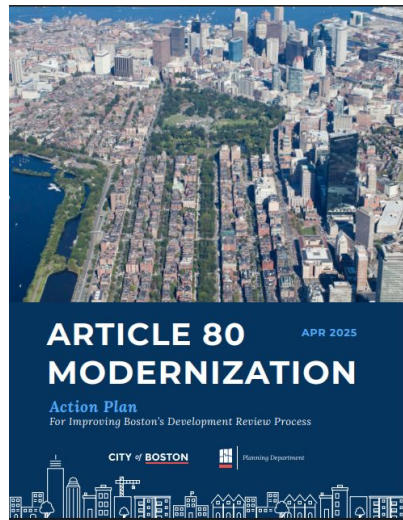
*How the city can review certain proposed new buildings, parking and loading, signage requirements, and more.*

**Zoning doesn't build or demolish anything; it acts as guides and limits to what people can build.**



# ZONING UPDATES ARE PART OF IMPLEMENTATION

Updating zoning rules is one of multiple implementation actions that emerged from the Action Plan that help meet the goals and vision outlined in the plan.



## ACTION PLAN

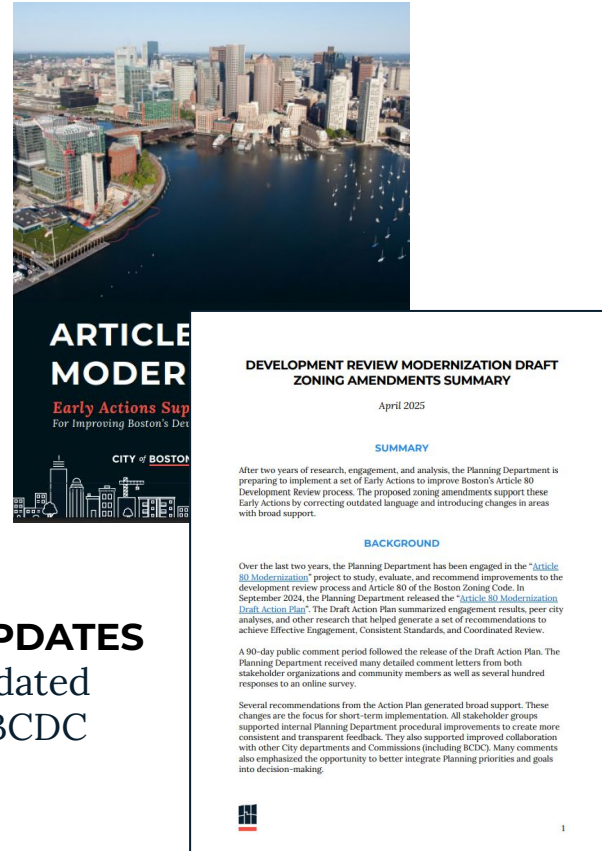
Lays out the direction for this project based on over two years of engagement, research & analysis

## EARLY ACTIONS

Outlines starting changes

## ZONING UPDATES

Correct outdated language + BCDC updates



# PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES

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## CHAPTERS OF BOSTON'S ZONING CODE WITH PROPOSED CHANGES

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ARTICLE 80	Development Review and Approval
ARTICLE 28	Boston Civic Design Commission
ARTICLE 2	Definitions
ARTICLE 28	Design Review



**You can check out these proposed new rules by visiting:**

[bosplans.org/A80zoningchanges](https://bosplans.org/A80zoningchanges)

[bosplans.org/improving-dev-review](https://bosplans.org/improving-dev-review)



# PROPOSED ZONING CHANGES: ARTICLE 80

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1

## MODERNIZE PUBLIC NOTICING REQUIREMENTS

Modernize outdated public noticing and document distribution requirements to reflect how we work today: posting documents and sending updates through our website and emails

2

## HARMONIZE WITH EXISTING STANDARDS

Add “Letter of Intent” (LOI) requirement into zoning text, so the expectations for the first step of review is more clear.

Introduce existing “Notice of Project Change” (NPC) term to the text, so the zoning matches the way things work today.

3

## FACILITATE UPGRADES AND RETROFITS FOR INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

Increase the threshold for certain interior alterations in an IMP from 50,000 to 100,000 square feet (eg. clean energy upgrades). These alterations exclude creating things like student housing or athletic facilities.

# PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: ARTICLE 28

## INCREASE THE THRESHOLD FOR BCDC REVIEW FROM 100,000 SQUARE FEET TO 200,000 SQUARE FEET

### WHY THIS CHANGE?

- BCDC commissioners are reviewing more projects than ever, as development trends have increased the average size of projects
- Staff analyzed projects over the past 5 years and found roughly 33% were under 200,000 square feet
- This will support affordable projects get into the ground faster. 9 of 12 recent projects, or roughly 75% of affordable projects reviewed by BCDC were under 200,000 square feet

### HOW WILL WE ENSURE IMPORTANT PROJECTS ARE NOT MISSED?

- The Planning Dept will retain a discretionary trigger for “Projects of Special Significance” that can be used to include projects below 200,000 square feet

Relatedly, BCDC is **instituting new bylaws to better clarify public testimony processes.**

These bylaw changes include sharing public feedback on the website, sending written public comments to commissioners in advance of meetings, and including live testimony when it is most impactful.



# NEXT STEPS

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# SHARE YOUR FEEDBACK AND QUESTIONS ON THE PROPOSED ZONING AMENDMENT BY JUNE 15, 2025

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1. Submit your comments in the form at the bottom of our project page, [bosplans.org/A80zoningchanges](https://bosplans.org/A80zoningchanges)

OR

2. Email us your comments at **article80modernization@boston.gov**



**ZONING AMENDMENT  
WEBSITE PAGE**



An aerial photograph of a city, likely Boston, showing a mix of urban development, green spaces, and water. A large white rectangular box is centered over the image, containing the text "WHAT QUESTIONS DO YOU HAVE?". The background shows a dense urban area with various buildings, a large stadium-like structure, and a body of water with a bridge in the foreground.

**WHAT QUESTIONS DO  
YOU HAVE?**

# HELP US IMPROVE OUR PUBLIC MEETINGS

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We want to hear about your experience during our meeting today so that we can make our public meetings better.

Please **fill out this feedback form** to help us improve our future engagement processes!



**FEEDBACK FORM**